

DISCUSSION OF THE AMENDMENT

Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the bringing is effected --continuously--, as supported in the specification at page 22, line 11.

No new matter has been added by the above amendment. Claims 1-13 remain pending in the application.

REMARKS

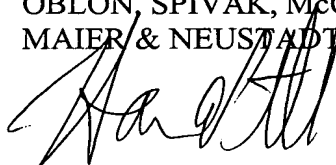
The rejection of Claims 1-13 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,635,102 (Mehta), is respectfully traversed. Mehta is from the same patent family as JP 8/319,200 A, which is described in the specification at page 5, lines 18-22; page 6, line 15, through page 8, line 14; page 21, lines 8-11; and page 22, line 23, through page 23, line 6. Mehta disclose a process for selectively removing a porous silicon oxide layer from a substrate having a portion thereon with an exposed dense silicon oxide to be retained on the substrate, the porous silicon oxide layer containing absorbed moisture therein, the process comprising introducing the substrate to a flowing anhydrous gaseous environment consisting of anhydrous inert gas, adding anhydrous hydrogen fluoride gas to the gaseous environment for a pulse time which is at most only shortly longer than that required to initiate etching of the dense silicon oxide, flushing the gaseous environment with anhydrous inert gas for a time sufficient to remove the hydrogen fluoride and water vapor generated by the etching of the porous oxide, and repeating the adding and flushing steps until the porous oxide layer has been removed (abstract). Thus, in Mehta, the anhydrous hydrogen fluoride gas does not flow continuously, as required by the present invention, but in pulses. As an example, Mehta discloses the use of 2 to 9 pulses between about 3 and 8 seconds each, preceded and interspersed by flush cycles of up to 60 seconds each (column 4, lines 39-42). There is no

disclosure or suggestion in Mehta to flow the anhydrous hydrogen fluoride gas therein continuously. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

All of the presently-pending claims in this application are now believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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Amendment Filed on:

HEREWITH

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend Claim 1 as follows:

--1. (Amended) A process for cleaning a surface of a substrate, said surface carrying thereon a high-density film and a low-density film lower in density than said high-density film in combination, which comprises continuously bringing a mixed gas of anhydrous hydrogen fluoride gas and a heated inert gas into contact with said surface of said substrate such that at least a portion of said low-density film is removed without impairing said high-density film beyond a tolerance.--